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10 May 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Intelligence Officers

FROM: David Y. McManis
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT: Monthly Warning and Forecast Meetings Guidelines

1. The following are suggested guidelines for NIO's on the care and feeding of the Monthly Warning and Forecast Meetings and the resultant reports. The major reason for holding the meetings and reporting on them is to ensure that significant trends and events which may portend harm to U.S. national security interests not be overlooked by the collection or analytic communities. We believe that the process is and must be kept dynamic and therefore recommend against hard and fast rules for the conduct of the meetings or for the reports. Indeed, even though most targets will require monthly meetings, there are some problem areas, such as nuclear proliferation, which clearly can meet less frequently. Conversely, there may be significant developments which may require more frequent gathering.

2. Monthly warning and forecast meetings:

--The purpose of the meetings should be made clear to the participants. They should be encouraged to bring to the table, not coordinated departmental positions, but rather their own analyses, concerns, alternative hypotheses, and even conjecture and speculation. NIO's should encourage this through non-attribution rules, strawmen, and devil's advocates.

--The field of view must be in the future, particularly looking at the mid-range, i.e., 30 to 120 days. Community representatives who agree to provide presentations should be encouraged to talk about what may happen, not to review what has already happened.

--All participants should be minimally cleared for [redacted]
[redacted] There is both a risk of overlooking something or inhibiting free discussion by having not fully cleared personnel in attendance. On those occasions when clearance requirements are not being met, the chairman should clearly announce the security level of the discussions.

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--Some attempt should be made to keep the size of the meetings manageable. If many target areas are covered more than one meeting should be held, or a single meeting handled in stages. There is significant inhibition of free discussion in large meetings.

--Specific attention should be given to collection gaps, processing and reporting requirements. CRES personnel attend most meetings and are working actively to provide feedback to future meetings. Similarly, DIO's and SNIO's should be prepared to discuss collection and processing concerns.

--To ensure the continued viability of the process, there must be value to the participants. This can come from letting them get recognition in their community, providing feedback on current policy concerns and developments, and providing them an opportunity to meet with their community associates.

3. Monthly Warning and Forecast Reports


--Monthly reports summarizing the warning meetings should highlight the warning concerns identified in the meetings; areas of significant disagreement; collection shortfalls, processing and reporting guidance. It is neither required, nor desirable that the report be a coordinated, consensus report.

4. Role of the NIO/Warning

--NIO/W will prepare for the DCI a monthly overview of the meetings comprising four parts: warning highlights; collection gaps; collection actions taken in response to previously identified shortfalls, and trends in the warning picture.

--NIO/W will be willing to help wherever desired in chairing meetings, acting as devil's advocates, or occasionally developing alternative analyses.

5. Attached are sample Warning Memoranda to be used as representational rather than directive.

 David Y. McManis

Attachments

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